

REMARKS

I. Status of the Application

By the present Amendment, Applicants are amending claims 1, 12, and 13. No new matter is added. Claims 1-29 are all the claims pending in the present application. Claims 4, 5, 11, and 15-26 have been withdrawn. Claims 1-3, 6-10, 12-14, and 27-29 have been rejected. The present Amendment addresses each point of rejection raised by the Examiner. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

II. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) - Heidel

Claims 1 and 6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,212,707 to Heidel et al. (hereinafter “Heidel”). Applicants respectfully traverse this ground of rejection.

Applicants continue to disagree with the Examiner’s rejection for the reasons discussed in the Amendment of December 26, 2007. However, in order to expedite prosecution, Applicants are amending claim 1 to recite that “an end surface of the collimator-lens array is in contact with a planar portion of said lens-setting surface.” This amendment further clarifies the type of contact between the collimator-lens array and the lens-setting surface.

As the Examiner concedes, the front surface of the ear 25 of Heidel contacts the end surface of the refractive lens 22 of the collimating lens assembly only at the corner of the ear 25. Therefore, at best, only the series of points in a line that define the corner of the ear 25 are in contact with the end surface of the refractive lens 22 of the collimating lens assembly. The end surface of the refractive lens 22 of the collimating lens assembly does not contact a planar portion of the front surface of the ear 25, as recited in claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 1 is patentable over Heidel at least by virtue of the aforementioned differences, as well as its additionally recited features. Claim 6 is a dependent claim including all of the elements of independent claim 1. Therefore, claim 6 is also patentable over Heidel at least by virtue of its dependency on claim 1, as well as its additionally recited features.

III. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) - Heidel

Claims 12, 13, and 27-29 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Heidel. Applicants respectfully traverse this ground of rejection.

Preliminarily, Applicants note that the Examiner has not provided a *prima facie* case of obviousness for claims 12 and 13 under MPEP § 2142. Claim 12 (as previously presented) recites “adjusting positions of said plurality of collimator lenses along said reference surface, and fixing the plurality of collimator lenses at the adjusted positions on said reference surface.” Similarly, claim 13 (as previously presented) recites “said plurality of collimator lenses are fixed to said reference surface in such a manner that positions of the plurality of collimator lenses are adjusted along said reference surface.” Although the Examiner concedes that Heidel does not disclose these quoted claim features (Office Action, page 5), the Examiner provides no reason why it would have been obvious to modify Heidel to perform the recited operation. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner provide such a reason in the next Office Action.

As discussed above, Applicants continue to disagree with the Examiner’s rejection for the reasons discussed in the Amendment of December 26, 2007. However, in order to expedite prosecution, Applicants are amending claims 12 and 13 to recite that the plurality of collimator lenses are fixed to the reference surface after adjusting the positions of the collimator lenses along a planar portion of the reference surface. Because claims 12 and 13 (as amended) recite

features similar to those discussed above with regard to claim 1, Applicants submit that claims 12 and 13 are patentable over Heidel for similar reasons. Further, claims 27-29 are patentable over Heidel at least by virtue of their dependency on claim 1, as well as their additionally recited features.

IV. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) - Heidel in view of Chiappetta

Claims 2 and 3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Heidel in view of Chiappetta et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,724,791; hereinafter “Chiappetta”). Applicants respectfully traverse this ground of rejection.

As discussed above, Heidel fails to teach or suggest that “an end surface of the collimator-lens array is in contact with a planar portion of said lens-setting surface,” as recited in claims 2 and 3. Further, Applicants submit that Chiappetta fails to remedy this deficiency in Heidel. Therefore, claims 2 and 3 are patentable over Heidel in view of Chiappetta for at least the aforementioned reasons, as well as for their additionally recited features.

V. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) - Heidel in view of Andrews ‘188, Andrews ‘535, and Kuniyasu

Claims 7-10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Heidel in view of U.S. Patent Number 5,640,188 to Andrews (hereinafter “Andrews ‘188”) and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,432,535 to Andrews et al. (hereinafter “Andrews ‘535”) and U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0018499 to Kuniyasu et al. (hereinafter “Kuniyasu”). Applicants respectfully traverse this ground of rejection.

As discussed above, Heidel fails to teach or suggest that “an end surface of the collimator-lens array is in contact with a planar portion of said lens-setting surface,” as recited in claims 7-10. Further, Applicants submit that Andrews ‘188, Andrews ‘535, and Kuniyasu

each fail to remedy this deficiency in Heidel. Therefore, claims 7-10 are patentable over Heidel in view of Andrews '188, Andrews '535, and Kuniyasu for at least the aforementioned reasons, as well as for their additionally recited features.

VI. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) - Heidel in view of Andrews '188 and Kuniyasu

Claim 14 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Heidel in view of Andrews '188 and Kuniyasu. Applicants respectfully traverse this ground of rejection.

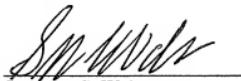
As discussed above, Heidel fails to teach or suggest that the plurality of collimator lenses are fixed to the reference surface after adjusting the positions of the collimator lenses along a planar portion of the reference surface, as recited in claim 14. Further, Applicants submit that Andrews '188 and Kuniyasu fail to remedy this deficiency in Heidel. Therefore, claim 14 is patentable over Heidel in view of Andrews '188 and Kuniyasu for at least the aforementioned reasons, as well as for its additionally recited features.

VII. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

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Respectfully submitted,



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